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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2563

June 19, 1992

**CATTLE INSPECTION CHANGES** -- USDA will add meat inspectors to assure food safety at five meat packing plants operating under an approved quality control program, says H. Russell Cross, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "This will be one of a number of steps we will be taking to modernize cattle inspection," he says. Cross says USDA has based the initial improvements on recommendations made by a scientific review panel, which concluded that beef products produced in plants operating under streamlined inspection procedures are of equal quality and safety as those produced under traditional inspection procedures. Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.

**STATES TO GET \$310 MILLION** -- USDA will share an estimated \$310 million in 1992 National Forest System receipts among 43 states and Puerto Rico. Receipts are collected from land-use fees and sale of resources on 191 million acres of national forests and grasslands. Federal law requires states to use their share of the receipts for public schools and roads. Contact: Ann Matejko (202) 475-3787.

**CHEESE-MAKING LEFTOVERS STOP EROSION** -- To prevent soil erosion and boost harvests on poor soils, leftovers from cheese-making may be the "whey" to go. "We found that pumping cottage cheese whey onto sloped, furrow-irrigated fields can cut soil erosion losses between 65 and 75 percent," says Melvin J. Brown, a soil scientist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Kimberly, Idaho. Whey, in case you've forgotten your nursery rhymes, is a leftover from the cheese-making process. It is slightly milky and watery and is a little sticky because of its sugar and protein content. The scientists used whey from cottage cheese, which is acidic, about the same pH as vinegar. Contact: Melvin J. Brown (208) 423-6530.



**USDA RADIO'S GARY CRAWFORD** has won the top award the New York International Radio Festival gives in the information/education category. Gary won for "The Bacteria Caper." In some ways, the awards are the Oscars of radio, because they cover not only journalistic achievements, but production, personalities and promotion. Other finalists in the category included the Australian Broadcasting Corp. and several other radio stations and production houses here and abroad. (USDA Photo by Bob Nichols.)

**NEW APPOINTMENTS** -- Daniel A. Sumner has been sworn in as assistant secretary of agriculture for economics. Sumner, who has served as the acting chief economist since January, was confirmed by the Senate June 9. Before coming to USDA as deputy assistant secretary for economics in January 1990, Sumner was a professor of economics and business at North Carolina State University, Raleigh ... Duane Acker has been sworn in as assistant secretary of agriculture for science and education. He was also confirmed by the Senate June 9. Before his appointment, Acker was administrator of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and Office of International Cooperation and Development. Before joining USDA Acker was president of Kansas State University and also was director and assistant to the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.

**FARM LABOR** -- During the week of May 10-16, there were 529,000 hired workers on farms and ranches in the 11 surveyed states (New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida, Michigan, Wisconsin, Texas, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington and California). This compares with 487,000 workers a year ago. Average May wage rates ranged from \$4.63 per hour in Wisconsin to \$6.45 in Florida. Contact: Tom Kurtz (202) 690-3228.

**WORLD OILSEEDS** -- USDA experts project world oilseed production for 1991-92 at 223.8 million tons, nearly unchanged from last month, but up 3 percent from last year. The major change this month is a reduction in Paraguay's soybean crop. Contact: Jim Matthews (202) 720-5448.

**VOTE SET ON MUSHROOM PROMOTION PROGRAM** -- USDA is asking mushroom producers if they want a promotion, research and consumer information program for fresh mushrooms. Producers will vote on the proposed program from July 22 through Aug. 12. The program, which would be funded by producer assessments, would be administered by a council of four to nine producer and importer members. Council members would be appointed by the secretary of agriculture from nominees submitted by the industry. Contact: Rebecca Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.

**PICKING A RIPE MELLON** -- Picking a ripe early-season melon takes a little know-how, says Tom Koske, extension horticulturist with the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center. "Watermelon ripen very little after harvest," Koske says. Some say the tendril nearest the fruit dries and becomes brown as the melon ripens. Many growers "thump" the melon or slap it, listening for a dull, hollow sound. A sharp metallic ring indicates immaturity. The surest way to check a melon usually is to check the ground spot, Koske says. The area where the melon lies on the soil is yellow when immature. It changes to a creamy white when the melon is ripe. Contact: Thomas J. Koske (504) 388-2222.

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**FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE**

**AGRICULTURE USA #1828** -- On this edition of Agriculture USA, Brenda Curtis travels to Cochise, Ariz., where she visits with organic farmers Doug and Evelyn Corron. She finds out how they started in the business during their so-called retirement years. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1310** -- Meat inspection changes; a forest management partnership; Western water woes; houseplant soap opera; farming on a few acres in the desert. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS and FEATURES #1819** -- USDA News Highlights; oilseeds and retaliation; irrigation for cotton; fields of plastic; an electric farmer. (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1525** -- "Tobacco" soap kills whiteflies; fungus fingerprinting; beekeepers keep watch; wild bee hunt; bee blips. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Tues., July 7, weekly weather and crop update; Thurs., July 9, crop production report; world ag supply/demand; Fri., July 10, farm labor report, world ag/grain situation, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation. (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)

**DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**  
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

**FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE**

**FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on USDA feed outlook; Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's cotton crop; Will Pemble takes a look at xanthase to recover natural gas; Pat O'Leary reports on farm income.

**ACTUALITIES** -- USDA meteorologist Ray Motha on weather and crops; USDA World Board chair James Donald on world supply and demand estimates.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on USDA's child nutrition guide; Lynn Wyvill reports on helping farmers with disabilities; Pat O'Leary reports on a new USDA trade office in Japan.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- Agriculture Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT.*

## OFFMIKE

**VIC POWELL** is on vacation, so this gives **Brenda** a chance to practice her writing skills!?

**WASHINGTON AG WATCH** ... All of us here at **USDA Radio-TV** are looking forward to saying hello to the farm broadcasters who are coming to Washington, D.C., to participate in this year's two-day event. **Taylor Brown** (NAFB president) and the public affairs staff in Radio-TV have been trying to get all the details worked out for this jam-packed session June 25 and 26. "Not only has this event become the news gathering opportunity of the year for many NAFB members," Taylor says, "but the 1992 program will be especially valuable because it will be held in conjunction with the quadrennial U.S. Ag Communicators Congress, which draws leading ag communicators from all fields."

**STORY IDEAS** -- One of the things the USDA Radio-TV staff wants to hear from NAFB members attending the Washington Ag Watch is what stories you want covered more, less or not at all! Please let us know, because you are our best clients.

### *Farm Broadcasters Letter*



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Radio-TV Division  
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**CONGRATULATIONS** to USDA Radio's **Gary Crawford** for bringing home top honors at this year's International Radio Awards Festival in the information/education category. I keep hoping some of Gary's production talents will rub off ...

**MAX MOLLESTON** (WKBF, Rock Island, Ill.) wrote to me about my reflections of the Southwest (OFFMIKE, April). Max said the column I wrote on my travels to Arizona brought to mind his own reflections of the Rockies after the NAFB Western meeting last summer. Max wrote a beautiful poem titled "Western Meeting." Space limitations dictate I can share only a few lines: "Shadows of clouds on the mountains spell in wind and water directions of timely and timeless progressions. Rock forms the past and future at a glance, habitable and uninhabitable ..."

*B*  
See you at Washington Ag Watch!

*Brenda Curtis*  
**BRENDA CURTIS**

Acting Chief, Radio and TV Division